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# Fairview business takes the LEED in development

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The windows in the building housing Impact Strategies' home office are there to provide more than a view.

The insulated glass meets the highest rating for thermal protection and saves energy, help maximize the natural light and also cut back on lighting costs.

The \$2.1 million, 20,000-square-foot building was completed last year. It has lighting inside that's programmed by computer sensors, which regulate the amount of light needed in a room by measuring the amount of natural light present. The sensors can also detect when someone is not in a room and will shut off the light.

The building also has no VOCs -- volatile organic compounds --in the paint that was used on the walls or the adhesives used to install the carpeting.

The Fairview Heights commercial and retail developer has also helped build other buildings with these "green" concepts that follow Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design --or LEED -- guidelines authorized by the United States Green Building Council.

The Green Building Council is a non-profit community of leaders working to make green buildings more readily available. Impact Strategies Executive Vice President Mike Christ said "green building" are the two buzz words in his industry.

"They have become very popular in the past several years in the basic concept to designing and building facilities and then being able to operate them in a manner that will minimize the impact we have on the environment and natural resources," Christ said.

He also said the building materials used absorb and hold heat but do not strain the building's ability to remain cool in the summer. Material used in construction are reused and recycled steel, concrete and asphalt. Bamboo is used for flooring and is a readily renewable resource that can be grown and manufactured in a short period of time.

Impact Strategies' office was built with tilt-up concrete walls. The project produced two dumpsters full of cardboard and paper and another dumpster filled with scrap metal. Each bypassed the landfill and were instead taken to be recycled.

"We're seeing many cities and government agencies and some large corporations now requiring green building with their new building," he said. "It's just become popular, so we have to be prepared to meet that demand."

Developers use building methods established by the council, earning points to rank the structure's level of energy efficiency. Impact Strategies also developed the \$6 million, 52,000-square-foot Greenmount Corporate Center located in the Interstate 64 and Green Mount Road corridor in O'Fallon last year with this in mind. It includes a water system that helps reduce usage by up to 20 percent.

Both buildings meet energy-saving specification, but neither is LEED-certified, the official designation from the council. Both were built utilizing LEED design and building principles and incorporate energy efficiency, conservation techniques and green building materials.

Last year, Frieze Harley-Davidson was awarded LEED certification for its store built on Green Mount Road in O'Fallon. The business earned the Gold Level designation for scoring between 39 points and 51 points on an extensive environmental standards checklist for its building, which includes a power-generating windmill. Platinum Level requires a score of 52 points to 59 points and is the only higher rating. Frieze is the first Harley-Davidson dealer in the country to be LEED certified.

Many developers across the nation have greener aspirations. According to the council, there are a total of 3,316 LEED-certified projects that have been completed in the United States since 2000, and another 25,460 projects have applied for certification in that time.

Green Building Council communications coordinator Marie Coleman said that because green buildings consume less energy, water and natural resources, they also cost less to maintain. In citing a 2007 study, *The Cost of Green Revisited*, Coleman said that this research found that LEED-certified buildings use 26 percent less energy than their conventional counterparts. Depending on the level of certification, that amount can be as high as 50 percent, and operating costs for green buildings can decrease from 8 percent to 13 percent.

"Though the benefits of LEED certification are numerous with public awareness of global environmental challenges as well as the current economic state, LEED not only offers great environmental benefits, but cost benefits as well," Coleman said.

"There is a tremendous amount of waste of natural resources in operation efficiency that take place that the LEED guidelines reduce," Christ said. "If done right, it's more economical with initial construction and more cost-effective to operate."

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